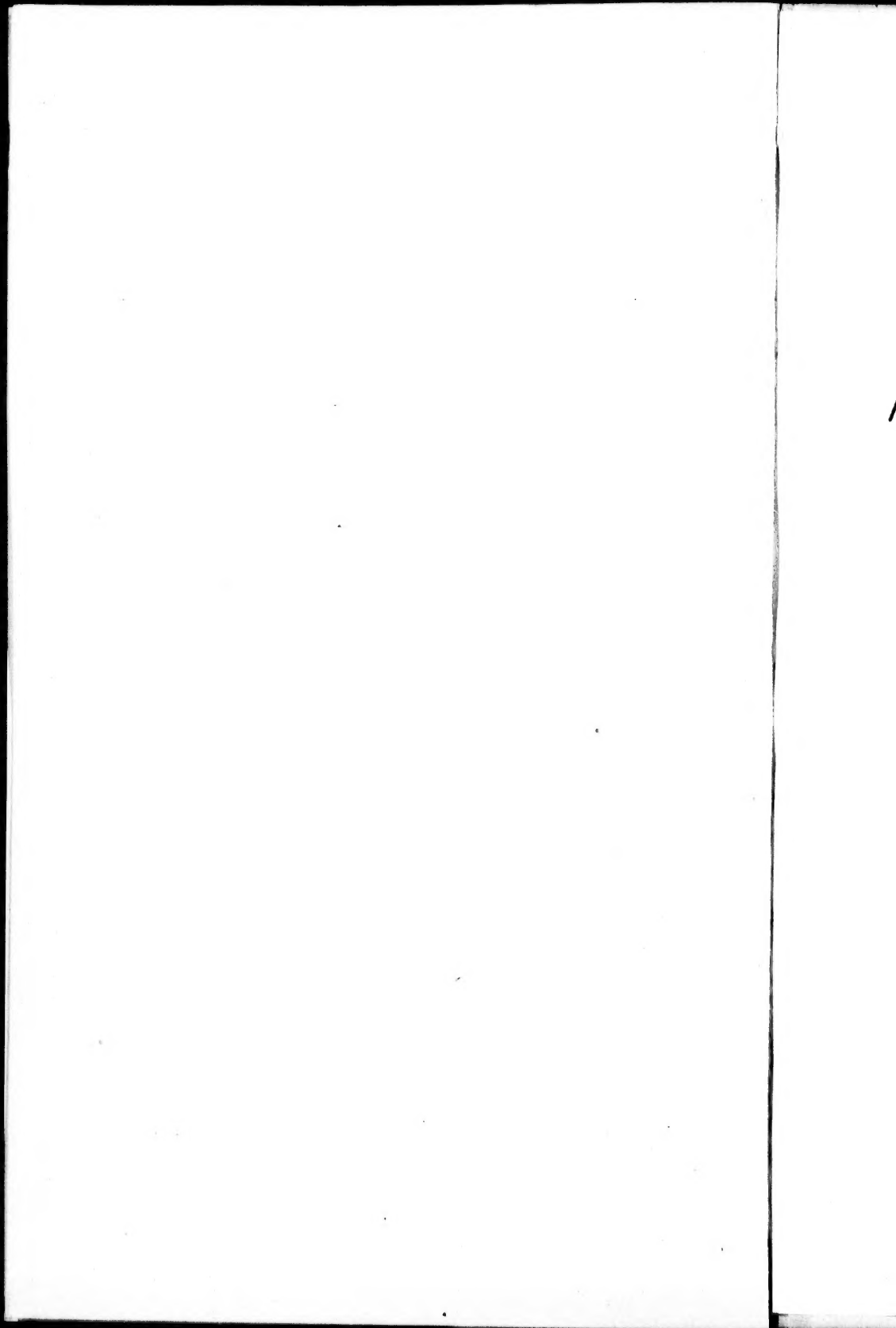




Bancroft

A
L E T T E R
TO THE
PEOPLE OF AMERICA.

(Price One SHILLING and SIX-PENCE.)

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A
L E T T E R
TO THE
PEOPLE OF AMERICA,
LATELY PRINTED AT NEW YORK;
NOW RE-PUBLISHED
BY AN AMERICAN.
WITH
A P O S T S C R I P T,
BY THE EDITOR,
ADDRESSED TO SIR W***** H***.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR T. BECKET, THE CORNER OF THE
ADELPHI, IN THE STRAND.
MDCCLXXVIII.

11

BRETHREN AND FELLOW-SUBJECTS,

THE contest in which some of you are at present engaged against the power of Britain, is the most important that has ever been recorded since the beginning of the world. You have been told, that your friends, your brethren, your protectors, in England, had formed a design to enslave you. You were alarmed at this intelligence.

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gence, and, believing it to be true, you very properly resolved to defend your liberty at the hazard of your lives. I applaud you for this resolution, and I pray to God, that every man in every part of the world, who has a drop of English blood in his veins, may resolve to spill every drop of that blood in defence of that liberty to which he has an undoubted right by the constitution of his country !

There breathes not a man, on the face of the earth, who would do more in defence of the natural rights of mankind than myself. I even honour the enthusiastic spirit which caught the alarm, though it should prove, upon enquiry, that you were alarmed without a cause.

You

You were too universally sensible of your singular felicity under the mild government and protection of Britain, not to start at the least apparent change of system. I applaud your vigilance. You knew well that kings, and ministers are naturally rapacious after power, and you wisely resolved to oppose the first design of lawless dominion.

But, my beloved brethren, let us proceed without heat, prejudice, party zeal, or animosity, to enquire, coolly and deliberately, into the real foundation of your apprehensions.

Great, very great, pains have been taken to persuade you, that Britain had formed a regular plan

to reduce you to a state of slavery. This is, in truth, a heavy charge against the mother country. If she really had conceived such a design, you acted wisely, prudently, and justly, in disclaiming all duty to such a parent. But the charge is of so extraordinary a nature, and so highly improbable, that you ought not to believe it, without the strongest and most indisputable evidence. Was it the king that intended to make slaves of you?—The king has no such power. Was it the king's ministers? Such an attempt would cost any minister his head. Was it the parliament? The members of parliament are too happy in the enjoyment of constitutional liberty, to deprive any part of the British dominions of
that

that blessing, well knowing that slavery, once begun in the extremities, would, like a gangrene, soon eat its way to the heart. Their own preservation therefore was your sufficient security.

From this reasoning, I presume, it will be granted, that the charge against Britain of a premeditated design to enslave America is, at least, improbable. But we will come nearer to the point, and proceed to facts.

That no government can exist, which is not supported by the people, is a self-evident proposition; therefore, the people, in every country must be taxed. In this respect all nations are alike. The

B 3 difference

difference lies solely in the mode of
 taxation. It is the peculiar privilege
 of Britain to be taxed, not by
 the king, not by the minister, but
 by themselves, their representatives,
 their fellow-subjects. This is, in-
 deed, a great, a glorious privilege!
 —a privilege on which the security
 of the property of every individual is
 firmly and permanently established.
 But America is not represented,
 therefore she could not be constitu-
 tionally taxed by a British Parlia-
 ment. I allow the plea its utmost
 validity; but are we therefore to
 conclude, that America had a right
 to a total and perpetual exemption
 from taxation? If this question be
 answered in the negative, which I
 presume I may take for granted, it
 necessarily follows, that the only
 remaining

remaining question is, not *whether America ought to have been taxed*; but, *by what means?*

The matter in dispute being thus reduced to a simple question, we shall now come at the truth without much difficulty. But here let us pause a moment, and recollect the substance of the few preceding pages. I am writing to a sensible people, who, if I make a blot, will surely hit it. I shall therefore endeavour, as I go along, so effectually to clear the road to truth, as not to leave a single shrub to hang a doubt on.

SECTION II.

IF the reader's attention to the matter of the preceding section hath been equal to the importance of the subject, he must certainly perceive, that the natural subjects of Britain, wheresoever settled, cannot possibly be enslaved without such violence to the constitution, as would alarm and rouse the most indolent of their brethren at home. I say, *the natural subjects*; for, in this dispute, it is essentially necessary to distinguish these from *conquered subjects*, because it hath been urged, with some apparent degree of weight, that the Canadians do not enjoy the privileges of Englishmen. To this I answer, that the Canadians
are

are not deprived of any privileges to which they were born ; that they surrendered to Britain under certain articles of capitulation, which have been religiously observed ; that the laws by which they are now governed, were enacted at their own request, and that they are so perfectly satisfied with their situation, as not to entertain the least idea of accepting the invitation from the United States to become one of their number.

But, say the advocates of America, the Protestant government of England hath established Popery in Canada. Without cavilling about the word *establish*, it is sufficient to observe, that by their capitulation, they were entitled to the full and perfect

perfect enjoyment of their religion, which they could not have done if their priests had not been authorised by law, to sue for their tithes. But surely it ill becomes America to pretend an alarm at the introduction of Popery, when her first, her *great and good ally* is a Popish prince, who, if he be a real Papist, must necessarily use every art to propagate a religion, which he believes to be the only possible passport to heaven.

After this necessary digression concerning Canada, let us now return to the immediate object of our discussion. What are the facts on which America founds her conjecture, that Britain designed to deprive her of her liberty? Presumptive

tive evidence, I have proved in my first section, militates on the opposite side of the question; we must therefore once more have recourse to facts. The Parliament of Great Britain passed certain acts imposing taxes on America. America objects to these taxes, because she is not represented; but that this was only a *pretended* objection is self evident, because she continues to persist in her disobedience, although the affair of taxation has been given up. I wish the honest people of America would press this argument, with all its weight, upon their present governors. Ask them when, for the sake of restoring peace, all their grievances were promised to be redressed, why they still refused to return to their obedience

dience of the government under which they were born, and under whose protection they were the happiest people in the universe ?

But though I have acknowledged that no unrepresented body of British subjects ought to be taxed by Parliament, let it not be forgotten, that none of the charters under which the subjects of Britain first settled in America, exempted them from taxation, and that one of them positively says, *they shall not be taxed except by the Parliament of Britain*. This exception was evidently inserted in order to secure them from being taxed by the king's sole authority, which might otherwise have been
ap-

apprehended, as by his sole authority they were first established.

If the reader be an impartial enquirer after truth, I will now ask him, upon his honour, whether this particular colony, in whose charter the above exception appears, might not have been legally taxed? And I also ask him, whether he does not believe that the other colonies would not have been glad of the same exception, for their own security against the prerogative of the crown? I do not mean to draw more from this argument than it necessarily implies. I mean only to prove, that parliament might naturally proceed to tax the king's subjects in America, without any just suspicion of intentional, illegal, usurpa-

usurpation. It was a new case, and so doubtful, that the wisest and honestest men in England differed in opinion concerning it. Now admitting the legality of taxing the colonies to be a doubtful case, there were two very powerful reasons in justification of the attempt to bring the question forward; *the national debts of Britain, and the affluence of America.* As to the first of these reasons, notwithstanding all the sophistry which hath been employed to prove the contrary, it still remains a notorious fact, that a considerable part of the national debt of Britain hath been contracted in defending America. The fact is indeed generally acknowledged, but the obligation is denied. England, we are told,

told, defended America from the French and Indians, as a farmer defends his sheep from the wolves, because they yield him wool. But do these sheep owe their master less obligation, because his emolument happens to coincide with their preservation? Besides, these sheep, if they have any gratitude, will recollect, that he not only employed a shepherd to take care of them in their infancy, when they yielded him no wool, but that, by protecting their solitary progenitors, he was the cause of the very existence of every individual in the present numerous flock. This simile exhibits a very striking portrait of America. The first settlers in America must soon have been drove into the sea, had they not been pro-

ted by Britain. These settlers, if they had remained in Europe, would not have produced half the number of children ; consequently at least half the present inhabitants of America owe their existence to the protection of Great Britain.

S E C T I O N. III.

ADMITTING the *legality* of taxing America by authority of Parliament, to be a dubious point, I have asserted in the foregoing section, that, in *equity*, there were two reasons sufficient to induce Parliament to adopt the measure, viz. *the national debt* ; and *the affluence of America*. The first of these

these I have already dispatched ; as to the second, I appeal to every unprejudiced American : Were there any beggars to be seen in the streets of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Charles-Town, in the villages, or on the roads ? Is there any part of Europe in which labour was so extravagantly paid, and where, consequently, the lowest class of people lived so well ? Did not the common cart-men in New York and Philadelphia live better than the middling trades-people in England ? And though labour was exceedingly high, were not all the necessaries of life remarkably cheap ? Can there be a more incontestible proof of affluence ? Were not all the masters of ships and the merchants by whom they were employed,

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ployed, in every part of the continent of America, accumulating wealth to an amazing degree? Did not the northern colonies abound with wealthy farmers, and the southern with gentlemen of large fortunes? Was there in any part of America, the least appearance of that penury and distress, so visible in many of the inhabitants of every country in Europe? Was there a single merchant, of any note, in the city of New York, who did not exhibit a very valuable sideboard of plate? Are these signs of a country unable to contribute a grateful pittance towards the support of the kingdom to which it stands indebted for its very existence? Was it for such a country, when she was asked only
to

to contribute a trifle towards the maintenance of her own government, to quarter a few soldiers for her own defence ; was it for such a country to dispute about an intricate point of law ? Are these people the descendants of Britons ? Where is their generosity ? where their gratitude ? where their equity ?

England hath been egregiously deceived in almost every circumstance concerning America ; but no instance more flagrantly than in the estimation of her wealth. The people of America were doubtless the most affluent people in the world. But there was, in the opinion of a celebrated writer, another reason why taxes would have been less burdensome to Ame-

rica than to any other nation. This celebrated writer was a subject of your *great and good ally*, the king of France ; you will consequently pay a proper regard to his opinion. I will quote the passage in the original : as French must now become the language of America, you cannot begin to learn it too soon.

——“ Regle general : on peut
 “ lever des tribut plus forte, a proportion de la liberté des sujets ;
 “ & l'on est forcé de les moderer,
 “ à mesure que la servitude augmente. Cela a toujours été, et
 “ cela fera toujours. C'est une
 “ regle tirée de la nature, qui ne
 “ varie point ; on le trouve par
 “ tous les pays : en Angleterre, en
 “ Hollande, et dans tous les etats
 “ où

“ où la liberté va se dégradant
“ jusqu'en Turquie.”

Esprit des Loix, tom. ii. chap. 12.

For the benefit of those few Americans who may not be quite perfect in the French language, I could have wished to subjoin a translation of this passage; but I am fearful of offending their *Excellencies the Right Hon. Congress*, who are about to publish an edict, enjoining every liege subject of the United States of America, immediately to follow their example in providing himself with a French grammar and dictionary. Dr. Franklin will be quoted as an instance, that the French language may be acquired, with proper study and application, even at the age of

seventy-two. It is indeed whispered, notwithstanding the Doctor's indefatigable application to his French grammar, that there are some of the *secret* articles in the treaty of alliance, which he did not perfectly understand: but allowing a little for dotage, and a great deal for the exquisite subtilty of French genius and French language, the Doctor is quite excusable.

Speaking of the strange alliance with France, I am naturally led to express my astonishment, at the supineness, the shameful negligence, with which the people of America have suffered themselves, without their consent or approbation, to be linked, bound, chained to a nation, which, from their souls,
they

they abhor ! a nation, which, in manners, customs, policy, religion, every thing, differs from America, as light from darkness. The union is a monster, half sheep, half monkey. Fy ! Fy ! and are ye really the offspring of Old England ?

Seriously, Americans, I marvel exceedingly, that you do not insist on a full, an ample, a total promulgation of this treaty with France. The Congress tells you, that some of the articles are improper to be known by the enemy ; but I tell you, that all the articles are known by the ENEMY, as the Congress are facetiously pleased to call their sovereign. These articles are concealed, because they are ashamed of them. Ask the Congress, whether they have not mortgaged the

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whole,

whole, or part of America? If they deny this, ask them what then they have given as a security to France for the vast sum she has lent them? What equivalent for the expence of a large fleet of ships of war, sent across the Atlantic for the sole purpose of assisting America? What compensation to France for rushing precipitately into a war with England, contrary to the interest and inclination of her old allies, and with the disapprobation of every power in Europe? If, in answer to these questions, Congress should tell you, that except an open trade with America, THEIR GREAT AND GOOD ALLY, is solely influenced by his AFFECTION FOR LIBERTY, and THE NATURAL RIGHTS OF MANKIND, you would laugh, even in the face of Congress.

Possibly

Possibly some of my readers may be of opinion, that I have exhausted the subject of the French alliance. The subject is inexhaustible. If I had a parrot at Philadelphia, I would teach him to cry *French alliance*, till the whole Congress, French ambassador and all, should grow heartily sick at the sound. As to the futile pretence, that the French king hath concluded this alliance, merely in expectation of an open trade with America, the attempt to make you believe it, is an affront to your understanding. The French minister is not so unacquainted with the American trade, as to flatter himself that it can ever become an object of importance to the French nation. The reasons are obvious. Their manu-
factures

factures are much inferior to those of England; French merchants, in general, have so little credit in America, that very few people will ever entrust them with the sale of a cargo; French manufacturers, and French merchants, are too poor to afford that credit which the nature of the American trade requires. If indeed the French minister could have obtained, from Dr. Franklin, an exclusive trade with America, the case would have been very different; but so long as the Americans are suffered to trade with whom they please, they will, for the reasons abovementioned, always trade with England, in preference to any other country. Merchants may be speculative politicians; but they cease to be merchants,

chants the moment they act contrary to their own interests.

I have not yet done with this French alliance. I am fond of the subject, because I clearly perceive, that it will act more powerfully than fleets and armies, in the good work of restoring America to the parental arms of Britain. The Americans have hitherto supported the character of a virtuous, religious people, peculiarly attached to the Protestant faith. Is America unacquainted with the tenets of Popery? Is there a Popish country in the world, where the Protestant religion is tolerated? Is it not the peculiar genius of Popery to insinuate itself into all countries, and

and to use every possible means of propagating its doctrines, wherever it gains a footing? What then has America to expect from a Popish alliance, but shoals of priests under every possible disguise? Yet the religious sentiments of a Popish ally are less to be dreaded than his political opinions, which are always inconsistent with civil liberty. Is there a Popish prince in any part of the world, whose subjects are not in a state of civil, as well as religious slavery? Is there a single example to be found in the universal history of mankind, since the creation of the world, of a free people assisted (*bona fide*) by an arbitrary prince, in the preservation of their liberty? That such an event never did happen, is most certain,

certain, and that it should now happen, can be expected only by the weakest collection of heads that ever usurped the government of any country. But Lewis XVI. is a phænomenon of greatness and goodness, a lover, a patron of liberty—Corfica—Corfica—Corfica!—No, no, the people of America are too well acquainted with the history of mankind to be so deceived: they recollect too many flagrant instances of French perfidy, to put any faith in their compliments, their promises, or even in their most solemn treaties of amity and alliance; they are perfectly convinced, that France considers nothing but her own interest, and that nothing can be for the interest of France, which will not prove disagreeable,

able, detrimental, destructive to America.

In order to persuade Great Britain to treat with America as an independent people, it hath been artfully insinuated, that if she spends too much time in hesitation, the American merchants will in a little while forget their correspondents in England ; they will establish a confidential intercourse with France ; the fashions of London will gradually give way to those of Paris, and that when the trade has once taken a new channel, it will be impossible ever to bring it back. These arguments are sufficiently answered in the first part of this section ; but, if there should still remain the shadow of a doubt, I will appeal
to

to the feelings of every honest, unprejudiced man and woman on this continent. Tell me, ye sons and daughters of Old England, whether your hearts do not revolt at the idea of an union with France? Whether French manners, French politicks, French perfidy, French fashions, do not inspire you with detestation? Whether the very sight of a Frenchman in your streets, is not an object of ridicule, disgust and contempt? Whether they have not already given you sufficient proof of their perfidious designs, and of their inability to assist you? Now, lay your hands upon your hearts; give me honest answers to these questions, and the dispute is ended.

SECTION IV.

IT hath ever been the practice of designing casuists, whose cause would be injured by perspicuity, to perplex the subject with a profuse jargon of vague terms and unintelligible distinctions. The common reader who has no leisure nor inclination to follow the writer through all his intricate windings, admits his conclusions without sufficient attention to the principles on which they were founded, and is thus deceived into a belief, that he has confuted his adversary. The people of America have been frequently amused and perplexed with the terms of *external* and *internal* taxation; and they have been taught

to believe, that their liberty entirely depended on a nice distinction between the two ; nevertheless the people of America are, at this moment, as incapable of drawing the line, as when the dispute began. The most celebrated British writer, in favour of the rights of America, attempting to put the matter out of doubt, informs us, that *internal* taxation is for the purpose of raising a revenue, and *external* taxation solely for the regulation of trade. It is truly amazing that any man of common sense, or common honesty, should deceive himself, and wish to deceive others with such stuff ! Can any thing be more evident than that all taxes are levied for the purpose of raising a revenue ? Can any real difference arise from the

D difference

difference of application? What difference does it make to an American subject, whether the dollars which he pays in taxes are sent to England, and guineas sent back to build a fort for his protection; or whether those dollars were immediately expended for the same purpose in America? What difference is it to the consumer, whether he pays a duty on tea at London or at Boston? But, taking off a shilling per pound in London, and laying on only three pence in America, made a considerable difference to the band of smugglers by whom you have been misled.

I am this moment in the utmost astonishment, at reading in Rivington's paper of this morning (Oct. 3d.)

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an answer from the Congress, to a letter written by Sir Henry Clinton; an answer which ought to be engraven in letters, not of gold, but of *brass*, on every *liberty-pole* in America, and at the corner of every street in every town in Europe, that all the world may judge whether such impudence be any longer supportable? That the impertinent folly of this memorable answer may be properly understood, it is necessary that I should first transcribe Sir Henry Clinton's letter to the Congress. These letters cannot be made too publick, nor be too carefully preserved.

*To Mr. Rivington, Printer to the
King's most Excellent Majesty.*

New-York, Oct. 2d. 1778.

" SIR,

" YOU will be pleased to publish the following copy of a letter
" from His Excellency Sir Henry
" Clinton, K. B. addressed to the
" President and Members of the
" Congress, with the answer sub-
" joined. I am,

" SIR,

" Your most obedient,

" Humble Servant,

" JOHN SMITH, Sec."

N. B. His Excellency addressed another letter of the same date and tenor to General Washington, to which he has as yet received no answer.

To

*To His Excellency Henry Laurens,
Esq; President, and others the
Members of the American Con-
gress at Philadelphia.*

“ New-York, 19th Sept. 1778.

“ SIR,

“ NOTHING but his Ma-
“ jesty’s positive instructions, of
“ which I send you an extract, could
“ have induced me to trouble you or
“ the American Congress again on
“ the subject of the troops de-
“ tained in New-England, in
“ direct contravention of the treaty
“ entered into at Saratoga. The
“ neglect of the requisitions al-
“ ready made on this subject is
“ altogether unprecedented among
“ parties at war. I now however

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“ repeat

“ repeat the demand, that the convention of Saratoga be fulfilled ;
“ and offer by express and recent
“ authority from the king, received
“ since the date of the late requisition made by his Majesty’s
“ Commissioners, to renew in his
“ Majesty’s name, all the conditions stipulated by Lieutenant-
“ General Burgoyne, in respect to
“ the troops serving under his command.

“ In this I mean to discharge
“ my duty not only to the King,
“ whose orders I obey ; but to
“ the unhappy people likewise,
“ whose affairs are committed to
“ you, and who I hope will have
“ the candour to acquit me of
“ the consequences that must
“ follow

(39)

“ follow from the new system
“ of war you are pleased to in-
“ troduce.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ S I R,

“ Your most obedient,

“ And most humble Servant,

“ H. CLINTON.”

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To

*To His Excellency General Sir
Henry Clinton, K. B. &c. &c.
New York.*

Philadelphia, Sept. 28, 1728.

“ SIR,

“ YOUR letter of the 19th
“ was laid before Congress, and I
“ am directed to inform you that
“ the Congress of the United States
“ of America make no answer to
“ insolent letters.

“ I am with due respect,

“ SIR,

“ Your obedient,

“ Humble fervant,

“ CHA. THOMSON, Sec.

Perhaps the reader may be at some loss to point out the *insolent* part of Sir Henry Clinton's letter, which could so irritate the *venerable*, the *wise*, the *prudent* Congress, as to make them, like Æsop's cat, forget their new character, and speak their old, their natural language. They must in truth, have been in a violent passion, thus suddenly to throw off the mask, and, in one angry moment, lose all their friends, and justify their enemies, in taking such revenge as British honour probably now holds indispensable. The part of Sir Henry Clinton's letter with which Congress was particularly offended, is the last paragraph. They hate every thing that looks like an appeal to the people. But they were

under a necessity of giving some such laconick answer to the letter, because it removed their only objection to fulfilling the convention. But to return to our subject.

That the people of America, who were not acquainted with the nature of taxation, should be easily alarmed by designing men, is not at all surprizing ; and yet it requires very little reflection to comprehend, that the burthen of taxation is hardly felt. The people in England and Holland pay heavier taxes than any nation in the world, and yet these are the two countries in which there is the least appearance of want among the lowest class of inhabitants. The taxes in Britain are said to be enormously

increased, and all the necessaries of life so extravagantly dear, that it is impossible to live; and yet there is hardly a man in England whose grandfather lived half so well as himself. Who are the people who feel the weight of taxation? Is it the farmer? No; he raises the price of his corn. Is it the landlord? No: he raises his rents. Is it the merchant, the shopkeeper, the mechanick, the manufacturer, the day-labourer? No, no: they all raise their prices in proportion, and generally in over proportion to the tax. Who then are the people who are really burthened by taxation? They are place-men, pensioners, officers of the army and navy, clergymen, and those who live on the interest of money in the funds. But in an industrious nation,

tion, which exports its manufactures or produce to foreign countries, the taxes are chiefly paid by foreigners.

Possibly it may be said, that high taxes will increase the price of labour, and prevent exportation, by raising the price of your produce and manufactures too high for foreign markets. But the high price of labour in America proves, that it is not always the effect of taxation; and it is very evident, from the prodigious exportation of English manufactures, that *internal taxation* is no burthen on the manufacturer, and no impediment to trade.

Prefuming that the good people of America are now convinced,
that

that this mighty hobgoblin, called *external or internal taxation* (they are the same thing) is not so horrible a monster as they have been taught to believe ; we will now proceed to a fair and candid investigation of the manner in which America might be legally and constitutionally taxed.—It is the undoubted privilege of Britons to tax themselves : That is, every bill exacting money from the subject, must originate in the House of Commons, must pass the House of Lords, and receive the assent of the King, before it becomes a law. Such bills must originate with the Commons, because they are the representatives of the people, and, in this sense, the people tax themselves. But the people of America are not represented in the British Parliament,

Parliament, therefore, they cannot be legally taxed by that authority. This, I apprehend, every American will allow to be a true state of the case.

The casuists, on both sides the question have, I think, generally supposed distinct modes of constitutional taxation : viz. Either by the provincial assemblies with the consent of the council, the governor, and the king ; or by a viceroy and parliament of her own ; or that America should send members to the British Parliament. The principal objection to the first of these methods is, that the sum, required by the minister to be raised by America, would be granted in the provinces, not in proportion to their respective abilities, but according

according to the degree of loyalty, or affection, or generosity, or justice of each assembly. An assembly of mulish republicans, if any such should arise, would probably grant nothing towards the support of majesty and the *whore of Babylon*. This would create disputes among the provinces, and the tax would always be unequal. The sum requested by the minister would ever be thought too great, and would be an endless matter of dispute between the American governors and the assemblies.

The second expedient is, a viceroy from England, with an upper and a lower house of representatives, assembled at Philadelphia. There are so few objections to this form of government, that if it had been pro-

proposed by America, the project would have met with no opposition.

The third scheme is that of being actually represented in the British House of Commons by members sent from America. If this be the choice of America, Britain can have no objection. If America, instead of wrangling about *external* and *internal* taxation, had petitioned to send members to parliament, this miserable war would never have begun. But it was not the design, because it was not the interest of your Adams's, and such sort of men, to prevent the war. They objected to sending members, because, though every province should send three, their number would be yet so small in proportion to the rest, that they could

could have no weight or influence in the House. This objection might with equal propriety be urged by the members of every county in England. The largest county in Britain sends very few members to parliament. Scotland sends only Forty-five, and yet Scotland has never since the Union had cause to complain of partial oppressive taxation. But, as I have before observed, the miscreants, by whom you have been deluded, were, from the first, determined to precipitate you into a ruinous war with your best friends. They themselves run no risque : for they have nothing to lose.

SECTION V.

BRETHREN and fellow-subjects! I now, most earnestly request your serious attention. These are not times to spend in idle casuistry and unavailing disputation. All your felicity, in this world, depends upon the resolution of a moment. For heaven's sake, trifle no longer, when your liberty and every thing you possess is at stake! Reflect seriously on the characters of those men in whom you have confided. Consider them one by one, and be cautiously inquisitive into the life and conversation of every individual. Is there a man amongst them of distinguished honour and probity? Is there a single individual
among

among the principal promoters of this unnatural revolt, whom you would have honoured with the appellation of an honest man? Were they not all people of doubtful origin, of desperate fortune, and of suspicious character? And are these the men by whom you are advised and by whom you wish to be governed? Depend upon it, low-bred people will be tyrants as soon as it is in their power. The truth of this assertion is proved beyond all contradiction, by the present transactions at Philadelphia, where all their proceedings are tyrannical and oppressive beyond conception. No publick trial, no confronting of evidence, no jury, no *habeas corpus*; in short, not the least vestige of your ancient British forms or judi-

cature, by which the liberty and personal safety of the subject were so effectually secured. No, no: these happy and singular securities of British liberty are unknown at Philadelphia; your governors are become tyrants; their principles are despotic, their proceedings unjust, and their intentions destructive to the freedom of America.

What I have already written, concerning the private characters of the persons, principally concerned in persuading the people of America to oppose the legal authority of the mother country, is of so much consequence in the dispute, that I cannot help repeating my request. I once more earnestly desire, [that the characters of these
men

men may be carefully examined and considered. I now proceed to answer some objections to the conduct of British ministers, the parliament, and of British generals.

The enemies of liberty (I mean the Congress, their abettors, and dependents) have industriously reported a thousand tales concerning the cruelty of the British army. Those, who are credulous from inexperience, believe such tales on the mere *ipse dixit* of the relator; but those who are better acquainted with the world, will recollect that mankind generally act under the influence of self-interest; that it is the interest of the enemies of Britain to propagate every report prejudicial to the British army, and

that a British general would act contrary to his interest, in suffering his army to treat with cruelty those whom he wished to make his friends. On these considerations, such reports will, to sensible people, appear highly improbable, and their belief will be proportioned to the evidence of facts.

It is well known, that large armies cannot possibly be entirely prevented from irregularities on a march. In the Jerseys some houses may have been plundered, and some burnt, contrary to the positive orders of the general ; but it is notorious, that the troops, in their several marches through that country, met with frequent insults and intolerable provocations, with
which

which the general was entirely unacquainted. Many of the peasants concealed themselves whilst the troops marched by their houses, and fired on them from the windows, as soon as they had passed. The British troops in their camps and cantonments, were perpetually insulted by small bodies of peasants, firing at their picquets and centinels in the night. Such banditti are, by all the laws of war, entitled to no mercy ; and if, after two or three such insults, the general had ordered every house within five miles of his camp, to be set on fire, he would have been justified by all the world.

The consideration of the conduct of the British ministry, and

of parliament, I have reserved to the last, because it is that part of my subject with which I wish, most indelibly to impress the mind of every rational American.

Doubtless the parliament of Great Britain have passed some acts concerning America which cannot be justified. But we must remember, that the only oppressive acts of parliament were subsequent to, and in consequence of, transactions equally unjustifiable on the part of America, and that consequently something must be allowed to national resentment: besides, these acts had evidently no other object than to bring back America to a proper sense of her own interest and of her duty to her sovereign; a duty she has constantly
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acknowledged, and without which she can never be happy. But admitting that these acts of parliament were oppressive, surely their last act must have convinced all the world, that Britain no longer entertained any resentment towards America, and that a Congress who could reject such terms, must have been previously determined, at all events, to usurp a sovereignty, to which neither the people of England, nor of America can possibly submit.

With regard to the ministry, it is necessary to observe, that their actions are not to be poised in the same balance with those of other kingdoms. The excessive freedom of the British constitution lays them under perpetual restraint, and this
restraint

restraint is productive of such delay as in time of war, must often frustrate the most rational plans of operation. I mention this circumstance as an exculpation of the ministry to those friends of government in America, who complain of dilatory proceedings. The ministry in England are always perplexed by an opposition in parliament, which, though salutary to the constitution, is nevertheless an evil sometimes productive of very disagreeable effects. It is, however, an evil which admits of no remedy that would not be worse than the disease. But the effects of this salutary opposition are particularly unfortunate, when the government is employed in suppressing the inordinate effusions and exuberances

rances of liberty. The male-contents believe, that all those who oppose administration, are their friends; the speeches of a Chatham, a Camden, a Burke, are repeated, and re-echoed in every licentious assembly; and the floridly argumentative harangues, which, in the laudable pride of elocution and irrepressible fervour of patriotism, were meant to preserve the constitution, unfortunately prove the cause of its overthrow.

Americans, friends, fellow-countrymen! I must now bid you farewell. My epistle is of sufficient length, and its contents enough for your present consideration. But before we part, I conjure you, *beware of wolves in sheeps clothing.*
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Remember, that obedience to legal authority is the positive command of God, and the constant doctrine of his word. Remember, that your present ridiculous rulers are in every respect your inferiors, who, without your authority, have bound you to a nation which you hate, and who in the true spirit of republican tyranny, already rule you with a rod of iron. Awake, awake, Americans ! Be no longer deluded by these notoriously unprincipled demagogues. If ye regard the liberty to which ye were born, arise and pull down these self created Lords, and tread them under your feet. Be assured, that Britain will now assist you with all her might. The insolent folly of this ridiculous Congress, hath, like a charm, in a moment annihilated

all opposition to government, hath united all parties in defence of the honour of the crown, of the nation, and of the constitutional liberty of America. England will now throw away the scabbard in earnest. She will resolve never to treat with this contemptible, this temporary thing called a CONGRESS, and she will convince the world that though she may be slow to anger, perdition waits on him that dares insult her.

There remains yet one argument, which, if I had used no other, were alone sufficient to rouse every rational American to an immediate exertion of all his powers. I mean the enormous debt of sixty millions sterling, contracted by the Congress; which enormous debt, if the Congress

gress continue to reign, must be paid by three millions of people, without coin, without trade, or any other possible means of discharging a twentieth part of the debt, except by an absolute sale of all your lands to a foreign power. Compare your debt, your number of people, and your total want of resources, with those of Britain, her debt, her number of people, and if you are not convinced that nothing but immediate reconciliation can save you from destruction, you must henceforward relinquish all pretensions to common understanding.

POSTSCRIPT.

TO SIR W***** H***.

S I R,

THE present editor of this pamphlet takes the liberty to subjoin a postscript, and to address it particularly to you, because you are intimately connected with the subject of the pamphlet ; because you will cut a very singular figure in the history of America ; and more especially, because in your late wonderful speech in the House of Commons, you have endeavoured
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to shift the publick odium from yourself to the king's ministers, and particularly to the secretary for the American department. That a general officer, who, for so long a time, without effect, commanded the finest, the most numerous, and best appointed army that ever sailed from Britain, against a despicable, inconsiderable rabble, should try every possible means of exculpation, is not surprising ; but it would be really wonderful if such a lame apology should raise your character a jot with the rational part of the nation.

Your advocates (for you have some) will tell me, that it is ungenerous to prejudice the minds of the people against a man who expects a legal enquiry into his conduct.

duct. This plea you have rendered totally invalid, by beginning your exculpation in the House of Commons previous to such enquiry. Besides, you have prematurely, informally, and impertinently accused others; you are therefore become fair game, and the publick have an indisputable right to an ample investigation of your conduct in America. That investigation I reserve. I mean at present only to consider your speech in the House of Commons.

You began with a declaration, that you could not approve of measures that favoured of cruelty or barbarity. — In answer to this, I ask you, upon your honour, whether you really believe that cruelty

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and barbarity were intended by the authors of the *Manifesto* last published in America? If you are so uninformed in the usual intention of *Manifestos*, your friend General Burgoyne will tell you of one instance, at least, in which a furious proclamation was issued merely *in terrorem*. But, Sir, admitting that the ministry really intended to carry on the war in future, with rather less lenity than heretofore, they are justifiable by every law of nature and of nations, because lenient measures in the extreme have been tried to no purpose. What are your precise ideas of cruelty and barbarity I know not ; my own ideas of cruelty I will tell you. When you, Sir, first landed upon Long Island, it was cruel beyond example to suffer the rebel

army to escape across the east river. You know it might have been prevented by two or three frigates, and that if you had not checked your troops, all the rebels on Long Island must have laid down their arms. This would have ended the war. It was cruel, horridly cruel, in you not to stifle the monster Rebellion in the cradle ; and, if this be a fact, you are answerable for all the increase of national debt, for every limb, for every life that has been lost in the contest, and for all the miseries, past and to come, inseparable from such a war. I honestly confess, Sir, that I regard you with the utmost surprize, I had almost said, detestation ; because I believe that if you had possessed the least degree of com-

mon sagacity, you could not possibly have neglected the many opportunities, which Fortune threw in your way, to destroy Mr. Washington's ragged army. You may be very honest, and you may be brave; but, in the commander of an army, something more is required.

You said in your speech, "that reflexions had been thrown on your character in your absence; but that you did not know by whom." —I will tell you by whom; by every man in England and in America, except those officers who are indebted to you for their promotion. The number is very considerable; for though you most absurdly complain, that some of your recommendations were disregarded

garded by the ministry, it is a notorious fact, that no British general was ever honoured with a more extensive patronage ; infomuch, that if you had remained another year in America, there would hardly have been a single officer below the rank of a general, who would not have been indebted to you for his promotion. Whenever you are called upon to answer to your country, I beg this circumstance may be remembered, and that the evidence of your quondam favourites and dependents may be considered accordingly. Why did you not pursue your advantage at White Plains ? Why did you not cross the Delaware when Washington had not three thousand men to oppose you ? Why did you not
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attack him at Vallyforge, when he had not a fourth of your army, and when a very intelligent friend of government offered to conduct you to a part of his camp, where he might have been attacked with the greatest facility ? Why, whilst you were at Philadelphia did you suspect, discourage, and totally disregard all intelligence and advice, though communicated by the most sagacious and steady friends of Britain ? Such things, Sir William, are whispered against you by persons lately arrived from America.—I hope they are not true.

You say, in your speech, “ that
 “ you were often left to shift for
 “ yourself, for want of instructions
 “ from the ministry.”—Your worst
 enemy

enemy could not have brought a heavier accusation against you. Whenever the ministry left you without instructions, they paid you the compliment of depending upon your sagacity. At such a distance no minister can adapt his instructions to every emergency, and a General who dares not act without minute instructions, would have been more in his element in the rank of a corporal.

You accused the ministry of whispering away your character ; and you afterwards, very foolishly, qualified the accusation by saying, " that if the reflexions against " you did not originate with the " ministry, at least, they did not " contradict them."---To this you
received

received a very explicit and positive answer from one of the persons accused. It was, in truth, so silly an accusation that all the minority blushed for you. But is it possible that you can be so weak a man as to suppose the ministry would vindicate the character of a general in whom they were so much disappointed ; a general who could not in three campaigns destroy a half-starved, half-naked, half-armed undisciplined mob, which even in point of number seldom equalled one third of your own army ?

Such, Sir William, are the appearances against you. If they be founded on facts ; if it should really appear that you were indolent, inattentive, spending your evenings
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at the play, your nights in gambling, and your mornings in bed ; that your counsellors were men of no abilities, that you were laterally deaf to all salutary information, and that your gallantries employed most of your time : if, I say, Sir, these things are true, there exists not a delinquent on the face of the earth so deserving of exemplary punishment as yourself.

In recollecting this your ever memorable speech, the speeches of the rest of the minority are naturally brought to my remembrance. These uniformly antiministerial members are doubtless all honourable men. The nation is perfectly convinced of their sincerity, and that places or pensions are no part

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of their object. But I will take the liberty to assure them that, in the estimation of their friends in America, the minority are objects of contempt and ridicule ; that, if independence had been granted to America, the farther pretensions of the Congress would have been infinitely too extravagant for even the minority to grant ; and that the speeches of this minority, however well intended, have more effectually supported the opposition in America, than the abilities of Washington, the resolution of Congress, or the arms of France.

Your most obedient servant,

AMERICANUS.

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